

June 2009

ATG Interviews Dennis Brunning Q&A with Carol Saller and Ann Ewbank

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Recommended Citation

Brunning, Dennis (2009) "ATG Interviews Dennis Brunning Q&A with Carol Saller and Ann Ewbank," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 21: Iss. 3, Article 14.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2314>

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At the only Edge that Means Anything / How We Understand What We Do

by **Dennis Brunning** (E Humanities Development Librarian, Arizona State University) <dennis.brunning@gmail.com>

The Editorial Side of Things: Q&A with Carol Saller, Senior Editor, Manuscript Editor, University of Chicago Press

@Brunning enjoys people on the publishing & editorial side of things. We are proud to introduce new friend, **Carol Saller**, author and editor at the **University of Chicago Press**. Carol writes about her passion for editing in her new book, the *Subversive Copy Editor* (University of Chicago Press) and at her blog. She also edits the popular Q&A column for the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

@Brunning: *Starting with the cocktail party question: what is a copy editor? What's your day like?*

CS: (You might want to get your martini before I start.) Days when I sit at the computer and edit a manuscript all day are rare. Today was more typical: I proofread jacket copy for a book I had copyedited, checked the revised page proofs of another project and proofread its index, phoned an author to figure out how a chunk of his text got dropped from his page proofs (typesetter's error) and how another chunk got duplicated (my goof) and how to fix it, attended a meeting to discuss why production schedules for a certain book series had lengthened in the last four years, evaluated the readiness of eight new manuscripts so the managing editor could assign them, and started on the paperwork for sending a manuscript to typesetting.

@Brunning: *Your new book, the Subversive Copy Editor, was just published and William Safire highlighted it in a recent On Language column in the Sunday New York Times Magazine. I'll bite — what is so subversive about copy editing?*

CS: Well, you caught me out. I don't really have much potential as a subversive. But so many copy editors — especially inexperienced ones — take their style guides as sacred texts, I began to *feel* subversive in counseling them to be more flexible and break rules when it helps the reader. And as a colleague pointed out, *The Subversive Copy Editor* is a much more fun title than *The Sensible Copy Editor*.

@Brunning: *I grew up in the typewriter era. The bible for correct format and references was Turabian. I'll admit more than one teacher deducted a point or two for not "following Turabian." Did you get to call her Kate or was it Professor Turabian? Does she still influence you?*

Alas, the late great **Kate** was before my time and didn't actually work at the Press. Nor was she a professor. (In fact, she never attended college.) Rather, **Kate Turabian** was dissertation secretary at the **University of Chicago** until 1958. Although she lived nearly thirty years after that and continued to update her style guide, sadly my tenure didn't overlap with hers, and we never met. In high school **Turabian's Manual for Writers** provided my first exposure to style rules, but as a professional copy editor I have always used *The Chicago Manual of Style*, since **Turabian** is geared for students writing papers and dissertations, while *CMOS* is for writers of scholarly books and journal articles.

@Brunning: *You are the editor of the Chicago Manual of Style's Q&A column. Has any question ever really stumped you?*

CS: Oh, good grief yes. Many! Daily. The stumpers usually concern how to cite a difficult source. Librarians especially will sympathize, knowing how many people are engaged in writing and editing arcane, inscrutable

matter in obscure languages by unspellably transliterated authors whose own sources are questionably documented and available only in subscription-based databases every other full moon...

@Brunning: *Students love software that automates endnotes. Any comment?*

CS: If the software is ever perfected and writers learn how to use it properly, it will be a cause for great rejoicing. The potential is there. Occasionally I see a manuscript where it's used well, resulting in a small miracle of organization and consistency. More often, though, it's used ineptly, and the mess it makes of notes and bibliography can be maddening.

@Brunning: *I love Librarians so much I became one. I can travel to the antipodes and attend the annual antipodal library conference and we talk the same, we know each other. Do copy editors feel the same?*

CS: Yes, I believe so. Perhaps librarians experience the disadvantages as well, however, that people you meet at cocktail parties think they have to be on good behavior around you? Around us, they think they have to speak polished prose; around you, I suppose they think they have to whisper.

@Brunning: *Another librarian question: we never know when we're done. There is always another book to buy, journal to evaluate and subscribe to, and always another question to answer. Knowing when the job is done is a theme in your book. When is the copy complete?*

CS: When I say so. There's a section in *The Subversive Copy Editor* called "Working to Rule" that urges copy editors to put down the pencil when they've given their best in the amount of time they're being paid for. Perfection isn't the goal, because there's no such thing as a perfect manuscript.

@Brunning: *User-produced content or Web 2.0 — what is the copy editors role in this open access to the word?*

CS: Although plenty of text goes cyber without the benefit of copy-editing, content on the best sites is professionally edited in the same way printed works and advertisements have always been. Readers can tell the difference. There will always be a place for copyediting; the question is whether it will ever be fully automated. At the moment that seems unlikely...but who knows?

@Brunning: *What grade does Wikipedia get for readable and comprehensible prose?*

CS: I suppose a slightly above-average grade would be safest, so let's say B-.

@Brunning: *You work at one of the most fascinating places — the University of Chicago and the esteemed University of Chicago Press. Some of my favorite authors wrote for the press — I have all of Wayne Booth's books. Any memorable blue pencil moments you can share with us?*

CS: As it happens, I copyedited one of **Wayne Booth's** books, *For the Love of It*, and his habit was to deliver his manuscript and page proofs personally. He rode his bike everywhere, pretty much to the end of his life, and would stride into my office, sit down, and chat without ever taking his helmet off. I wondered if he wanted to be prepared for a quick getaway.

@Brunning: *Thank you for a career devoted to making books on our shelves (and online) more readable and useable and writing so well about your art! As well — thank you for the edit which we preserve...*

Interview — Meris Mandernach from page 44

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for my MS in Library and Information Science. My first professional library job was as the Instruction Coordinator at the Science library at **Loyola University Chicago**. In 2006, I came to **James Madison University** in Harrisonburg, Virginia. I love to travel to visit with friends. When in Harrisonburg and not at work, I love to learn new crafting techniques such as: throwing pottery, quilting and spinning yarn from llama fiber. 🐫

Another Medium Moment: The New Yorker Digital Reader

Is it device, delight, or just plain digital — @Brunning explores...

@Brunning caught **C Span's** book network late, late, one sleepless weekend night recently. Some authors were participating in a panel on U.S. torture during **W's** presidency. A side-story emerged, though, about the journalist's role in investigative reporting when all the newspapers and magazines were gone. *Newsweek's* **Charles Fineman**, commented that technology, as we speak, was developing new ways to present news

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better than the Internet. He opined that no one really enjoys the online reading experience now; he argued most felt it reflected the price — free. He thought technologies yet to be revealed would bring readers back to a paid but more pleasurable reading. He talked about a compact scroll pad fed by Wi-Fi...

In this fin de siècle, better mousetrap spirit, subscribers to the *New Yorker* can register for Web access to the **New Yorker Digital Reader**. This is a Web-based viewer that provides a facsimile of the print edition on your screen. All you have to do is pay for the print and get the e — and you receive an email link so that you get a 24 to 48 hours head start on print delivery!

This reader looks, feels, and works like the reader used the last few years by *New Yorker* to sell its digital archive. I've got the DVD set that updates, every April, with a DVD that covers the most recent content. If you are a reader that enjoys a complete run of the magazine at your finger tips, this sort of did that. The archive started at the beginning of time as we *New Yorker* devotees define this — 1929. It covered up to April of the preceding year. With the DVD — and its younger sibling the USB drive — you had your *New Yorkers* pretty much current, with a 12 month lag.

Now *New Yorker* issues can pile up. And they are slippery — you do not want to leave them scattered around your bed, wake up in the middle of the night, and shuffle off to the bathroom in the dark. As we like to do **@Bunning**. Like banana peels in cartoons, a *New Yorker* will slip under-foot; flip you over, and not because of its lambent prose. It is very slippery information in print format.

Unfortunately, to “home archive” the *New Yorker*, you need a periodicals room in your basement or attic; like Kudzu, *New Yorkers*, kept, will take over your home.

That is why the **New Yorker Digital Reader**, on the Web, rules. As a subscriber, you have Web access to the *New Yorker*, stem to stern, anytime, anywhere.

Two caveats. You need a subscription. And you need to figure out the digital reader.

As near as I can figure out — and they always start you out with a page that shows the basic steps — you page through a discernable but myopic view of each page laid out just like the magazine. You click arrows and the pages actually flip over. To read, though, you have to click while hovering over text. This brings font to readable size and clarity. It is kind of like an eye examination when the test letters and numbers look better or best.

Then you have to click and drag and scroll the visible page around to advance your reading. You are kind of like a near-sighted person who has to put the page right up to your nose and move it around to read. Like **Jay Murphy**, a 4th grade neighbor of mine, who watched TV with his nostrils pressed against the glass. My Mother: I'm tired of windexing the screen just to watch Queen for a Day. Us: Jay, would you like some more coca-cola as we added more ice cubes to his tumbler.

I digress. I'm certain as a librarian can be that the **New Yorker Digital Reader** is on to something big. Just how big seems, now, a matter of intricate use of the mouse.

I'm sure this is a work in progress. I just wish there was an icon to click to speed up this progress.

New Yorker Digital Reader at <http://archives.newyorker.com/>.

Q&A for Ann Ewbank, Education Liaison Librarian

Arizona State University Teacher-Librarian and LJ Mover & Shaker Activist takes us to class...

@Bunning: *You are Education Liaison at the Arizona State University West Campus. What is a liaison librarian and what might a typical day be like for you, say, when Fall Semester 2009 begins.*

AE: Beginning in August until about mid-October you will see me running around like a chicken with my head cut off. That's only a slight exaggeration. Just like faculty and students, liaison librarian work ebbs and flows with the academic calendar. There are crunch times and slower



times. I start off the semester by inviting myself to as many orientation events as possible where I am likely to run into students and faculty. There I disseminate a one page flyer that can get them started. Things like major databases, document delivery, reserves, scheduling instruction, etc. are listed in a friendly and easy to read format along with my photo and contact information in case they have unanswered questions. I might teach two or three library instruction sessions, attend a faculty research meeting, and field student and faculty reference questions by email or chat. Then of course, there is the care and feeding of the library collection and subject Website (<http://libguides.asu.edu/education>). What I like about my job is that there are always challenges, and no two days look alike!

@Bunning: *Will “liaise” ever be a verb?*

AE: Oh, boy, we go round and round on this one in our committee meetings! How exactly does one “liaise?” Or are you a liaison to a faculty, an entity, a subject, or what? I will say, though, that saying that I “serve as a liaison” to an academic unit, is the most accurate way to describe what I do, holistically. I connect people with resources. I don't just wait for people to contact me, I actively seek out the best way to inform students and faculty about resources and strategies to make them successful in their academic endeavors. So, for me, serving as a liaison is a good word choice!

@Bunning: *Recently Library Journal named you among the two dozen or so movers and shakers in the profession. Congratulations! LJ loved your activism. What's shaking and moving on the library activist scene in 2009?*

AE: I heard somewhere that this country is in the worst economic crisis since the depression. And this is seriously impacting what library activists can do right now. For example, I hear almost daily of another school district in Arizona eliminating all of its librarians. Public libraries are laying off staff and restricting hours (the **Phoenix Public Library** went from 72 hours to just 48 hours open per week, and have closed some branches on Sundays, for example). And of course, we've felt this in our own institution, with furloughs, layoffs and contract non-renewals. What is striking about this major downturn is that no type of library is immune from cuts. And what that says to me, is that now more than ever, we have to come together, as public, academic, and school librarians to advocate as a whole. We have got to get out of our respective silos and start strategizing together about how to save our institutions for the constituencies we serve. ALA President **Jim Rettig** talks about this concept as the “Library Ecosystem,” where if one part of the ecosystem is in danger, all libraries are at risk (see <http://www.ala.org/ala/issuesadvocacy/advocacy/libecosystem/index.cfm>). In previous writings I've described a similar concept that I call “Libraries for a Lifetime.” All of our institutions, school, public, and academic, serve the same patrons, just at different times and for different purposes. The commonality is the user (see <http://azla.org/associations/2837/azla%20news%20october%202007.pdf>, p. 3). During this fiscally difficult time, we should be building relationships and networks between all types of libraries.

@Bunning: *We work at the same place but at two campuses across town from each other. Recently you helped lead an “all campus” retreat on liaison. You have an extraordinary ability to lead in the old fashion technology face-to-face. Yet once I emailed you to do this interview, we started twittering. Share with us some thoughts on how social networking tools co-exist with old fashioned ones in the teacher librarian world.*

AE: I am a huge proponent of social networking technologies and use them all the time. I'm on **Facebook** and **Twitter** all day. I am also a huge proponent of face-to-face human interaction where you can see body language and have unmediated conversation. Just like **Ranganathan** said “Every reader his/her book,” you could say “every interaction is communication mechanism.” We have all of these tools in our arsenal for communication; we need to be diligent about choosing the right one for the job. Here's an example. The college I support provides courses at 15 sites around the state via videoconferencing. Students who live on the Navajo Nation in northeast Arizona get the benefit of a live instructor without coming to campus here in Phoenix. From time to time, I provide library instruction in these courses. Inevitably, something always gets lost in translation and I receive emails asking questions about things that I covered in class. Why is this? I can't walk around the classroom and see who is having trouble. A shy student must ask a question in front of the entire class. While this technology has great benefits for reaching students, it is no substitute for face-to-face interaction.

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@Bunning: *Library instruction has gone in and out of style over the last two dozen years of my professional life. Unlike my stocks, it seems to be on the uptick. Any trend spotting comments?*

AE: During weeks two to six of the semester, I am very busy with library instruction. The college I support has 5,600 students spread across four campuses, and at my campus alone there are 1,900 students to reach. At the undergraduate level, I coordinate with the instructors of one particular course for library instruction (I am lucky that students must take required courses in sequence). In this course, I connect basic and important concepts to a particular assignment, a literature review. I teach students about finding and evaluating articles and other sources and they put that to use in their assignment. The trends are these: in order for library instruction to have maximum impact, you must connect the concepts you are teaching with an outcome. I am *not* a fan of stand-alone library orientations. Have you ever read a user's manual for a piece of electronic equipment that you do not own? Another trend is instruction as ambassadorship. Even if students retain 20% of what you teach them, they at least know where to go for help. In this day and age we need to market and promote the library and its resources. Instruction helps students (and faculty) see that the library is still relevant in the **Google** age.

@Bunning: *Open access, open source, open encyclopedias — technology has pried open what once was closed, guarded, and controlled by librarians, teachers, publishers, and corporations. In just a few words, SWOT this out for us from the point of view of a librarian focused on the literacy and teaching challenges these disruptive technologies create.*

AE: Your choice of words — disruptive technologies — is interesting. You're right, open-access *is* disruptive, but not in a bad way, in my opinion. Why should publishers, or librarians, for that matter, control information? Open access has subverted the dominant paradigm that only certain people are "qualified" to be experts. I believe in democracy, and the democratization of information is a positive step for librarians. It dramatically changes our role from gatekeeper and reference to instruction and teaching our users how to effectively evaluate information. I *love Wikipedia*. And I know that sometimes it is not a reliable source, but there is too much good stuff in there to just discount it because we don't know the authority behind the posts. Let's change our mindset about information and teach evaluation or resources. Bring on the revolution!

@Bunning: *Are library publishers and library technology companies providing us with the content and tools to accomplish your teaching goals?*

AE: In a word, no. There are too many proprietary platforms that don't talk to each other. Users (and librarians too) want federated searching. Why should they have to go to one database for one subject, and another database for a different subject? I'd like to see academic libraries, in particular, push for common database platforms that enable good quality federated searching.

@Bunning: *Are your students ready to learn what you have to teach them? Able?*

AE: I will teach anybody who walks through my doors. Honors students, English language learners, students with library anxiety, or those who are deficient in technology skills. I was a public school teacher for ten years, and we didn't have a choice about *who* we taught.

We had to teach them all! I feel the same sense of responsibility toward the students I serve here at **Arizona State University**. I work with future teachers, and I want to make sure that they know what they need to know so that they can impact future generations. So it's not really a question of whether students are ready or able to learn; it's about how I can differentiate instruction to meet the needs of all learners. I have a student-centered orientation.

@Bunning: *The Library Genie shows up and offers you three wishes (and he or she has TARP money or something like it), what would you wish for librarianship?*

AE: Wish one: that the stupid "shhhh — hair in a bun — bookworm" stereotype would die! I am *so* not like that! Wish two: that we, as a profession, become strategic-minded and proactive while focusing on our users. Wish three: that every K-12 school in the United States has a certified teacher-librarian. That teacher-librarians are not seen as "optional" or "a luxury."

Advice Column

From time to time @Bunning listens to readers and offers advice — consulting is extra...

Dear @B,

I'm a newbie librarian, just graduated with my MLS, and I'm frightened and confused. I can't understand all this talk about open access. It goes on and on and it is so strident and self-assured. The thing is I'm not so self-assured. As a newbie and it just seems to me that open access doesn't have much place for we librarians. I mean, if it is all free on the Internet and easy to search on **Google**, what am I supposed to do?

Please Help,

Darcie, Open Access Librarian,
University of Plano, Correctional Branch

Dear Darcie,

Take it easy hon...First of all, you will do alright. Us older librarians always doubted our profession but we got through it and now we are near retirement and all the better for it. Your youth and issues-based focus will make you smarter, wiser, and able to play the game. You have a lifetime ahead of you, the open access people to whom you refer, they average, what, 75 years old? They'll be gone when you assume managerial rank. Don't get me wrong, open access is here to stay but it's like that asteroid that may or may not collide with planet earth at some point in some future. It's fright is worse than its bite.

It does concern me, a tad, that you sign your letter "Open Access Librarian." This sort of typecasts you. Typically I'd expect you to be shriller, verbose, occasionally right, and leaning both right and left while you artfully skewer anyone and everyone who dares to challenge you.

But that isn't you. You've drilled right into the tooth pulp of the issue — you question purpose. Your purpose, should I be so bold, is to embrace open access and while you embrace away, just reach around the issue and understand your open access role has a grander goal — taking open access well beyond its emergent idea into its maturity, the blessed and highly compensatory world of co-option and business as usual in the high margin world of scholarly publishing.

Sincerely, **@Bunning** 🐼

Something to Think About — Where's the Journal?

Column Editor: **Mary E. (Tinker) Massey** (Serials Librarian, Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Jack R. Hunt Library)
<masse36e@erau.edu>

Last Thursday was one of those days that felt like a Monday. In fact, every day that week was a Monday! There was an endless trail of problems that started at 8:00 a.m. and didn't let up all day. Claims and problems were unceasing and each one became more of a struggle to solve. Finally,

near lunch, I had to track down a journal to try and find out why the check for renewal had been returned to accounts. Obviously the address was wrong. I confirmed the address that was used by us and accounts as the one on the Website. So what was wrong? I pulled the phone number off the same Webpage and

diald...waited...and heard, "This number has been disconnected..." from the hapless recorded message. Well, perhaps one of the other numbers would do. **Google** searching is fun when it gives you lots of answers. This one had three sites with four different phone

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